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ABSTRACT

This report integrates instructional materials and concepts on the teaching of culture in foreign language classes in three major areas. Part 1 deals with the description of sociocultural concepts of Spanish peoples with emphasis on the basic features of Latin American Culture including: (1) the family, (2) family events, (3) social peculiarities, (4) education, (5) social events, (6) social traits, (7) socioeconomic features, and (8) cultural characteristics. Part 2 is concerned with teaching techniques and contains a number of general principles, suggestions, and ideas for activities which are designed to help the teacher to develop and teach the cultural program. The last section proposes ideas for evaluating the student's appreciation and understanding of the foreign culture. A bibliography is included. (RL)

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CULTURAL CONCEPTS FOR SPANISH CLASSES

This report was prepared under HEW Grant Agreement OEG 9-300108-068 by
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Introduction

The field of cultural study has been one of the most neglected areas in the teaching of foreign languages. Teachers have been concerned only with the teaching of linguistic skills disregarding the socio-cultural patterns in which a language operates. In fact, it is only recently that teachers have come to the realization that instruction in a foreign language is inaccurate and incomplete unless it is supplemented by cultural study. The purpose of this paper is to provide the foreign language teacher and especially the teacher of Spanish, with a practical instrument that will help him implement the teaching of culture in a useful and meaningful way.

The work comprises three main parts all of which are interrelated. Part I deals with the description of socio-cultural concepts of Spanish peoples with emphasis on the basic features of Latin American culture. Part II deals with teaching techniques; it contains a number of general principles, suggestions and ideas for activities which are designed to help the teacher to develop and teach the cultural program. In Part III, the teacher will find ideas for evaluating the students' cultural appreciation and understanding of the foreign culture.

The socio-cultural concepts defined cover only a few aspects of Hispanic culture. The conditions of land and people are so diverse throughout Latin America that no simple generalizations can be made to describe the patterns of living which are encountered there. Nevertheless, those factors of differentiation are not sufficiently great to break the essential unity. Therefore, it is possible to make valid statementsabout certain values,

beliefs, and cultural characteristics which are shared in common by all Hispanic countries. A thoughtful consideration of all these socio-cultural factors may help understand why Americans and Latin Americans when meeting and after the exchange of customary greetings, do not gravitate naturally into one another's company, but seek out their own. The underlying fact is that those distinctive features of both Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples are the results of many centuries of divergent historical and social evolution.

The writer has been assisted by important criticisms and suggestions from the State Supervisor of Modern Foreign Languages, Miss Ann A. Beusch. To her and to the other Supervisors who also helped him in the preparation of this text, he wishes to give his sincere thanks and beg their forebearance for the unintentional errors and limitations of this project.

L. H. L.

Baltimore, July 4, 1970

The Family

General characteristics:

The family is the essential element in the Latin American society. The father is almost always the breadwinner of the family. He makes all decisions affecting the family. The mother is responsible for housekeeping, bringing up the children and giving attention to her husband. She receives respect as a mother, but generally remains in the background. Children are educated to obey and respect their parents and adults in general. Their activities as well as their performance in school are usually checked by the parents, particularly by the mother. Boys and girls in their teens are often subject to restrictions as to their outdoor activities. This is especially true of girls whom parents do watch carefully. Latin American children seldom do any housework unless they belong to a low social class. These characteristics can be observed in all social classes.

Because living conditions are changing every day, the social structures, including the family, are also evolving rapidly. In those regions where civilization and education have spread widely, families do not have as many children as they had in former times. Because economic conditions are becoming more difficult women now contribute to augment the family income. The number of women working in most fields is increasing rapidly, especially in large cities. Perhaps one of the principal characteristics of Hispanic families is their sense of unity. Families visit one another regularly and their members are often very

helpful to each other.

A Patriarchal Society:

Latin America is still a man's country. To all outer appearances, the male is the head of the family. He objects to his wife or daughters participating in public affairs, except in the field of social welfare. These facts may explain why the Latin American man is not favorably impressed with the freedom of American women and is confident that his own women are much happier.

Social Life (Family Events)

Latin Americans are extremely sociable. They like to meet their friends without any restrictions of time. Usually their social gatherings last for many hours during which they enjoy talking, eating, drinking, and dancing to the tune of the latest rhythms, In Peru, for instance, adults' parties usually start at 11 p.m. and end at 5 or 6 a.m. Youngsters' parties are usually from 7 to midnight. They enjoy both American and Latin American music. Adults prefer the popular Peruvian Waltz, a typical dance which is not like the Viennese waltz but a derivation of it.

The Latin American family carries on a number of social activities such as birthdays, baptisms, weddings, etc., to which relatives, friends (the expanded family) and acquaintances are invited.

Birthdays:

The birthday of any family member provides an occasion to celebrate in various ways: an elaborate dinner, a cocktail party or a dance. Sometimes Latin Americans prefer to celebrate

their Saint's day instead of their own birthday. In Peru a middle or upper class child's birthday is usually celebrated with a party at which children wear caps or hats, or masks, eat cake, pastries, etc., play and dance until 8 or 9 p.m. It is customary for the attending children to bring small presents for the child whose birthday is being celebrated. Common expressions used on birthdays are "Feliz cumpleaños" or "Que los cumplas muy felices".

Baptisms:

A child is customarily christened in his first five or six years of life. The parents select the "padrinos" (godfather) on the basis of friendship or family ties. The "padrinos" are the "compadres" and are considered to be an extension of the family. The relationship of the godfather to their godchild may vary from the more nominal to the actual assumption of certain responsibilities. Thus, the godparents might provide for the godchild's education or support in case of his parents' death. Baptism and First Communion are two important events in the life of a child. Parties are usually given on these occasions.

Weddings:

Relatively long courtships are common in Latin America. Young men usually wait until they have a steady job or are more or less economically established before they marry. In the upper and middle classes, the tendency to consider family background is still an important factor for marriage. A wedding engagement is announced after a formal visit paid by the young man to his fiancée's parents or guardian and during which he asks for her

hand, (pide la mano) or expresses publicly his desire to marry her. The blessing of the rings before a wedding is another custom in Latin America. This ceremony is sometimes done in church, but usually in the home by a priest in the presence of the family, relatives, and close friends. The couple is legally married in a civil ceremony in which a written agreement is signed. This agreement is almost always reinforeced by a religious ceremony in church, a most solemn act for the Hispanic people. This religious formality is usually followed by a reception and at times by a banquet. Both husband and wife (the newlyweds) receive many greetings and presents. Customary greetings used on this occasion are: "Muchas felicitaciones" (when addressing the bridegroom) and "Muchas felicidades" (when addressing the bride). Wedding presents commonly consist of household appliances or household articles. After the wedding ceremony, newlyweds usually take a honeymoon trip.

Burials:

When a person dies, he is not taken to a funeral home. Funeral parlors are not found in Latin American countries. Funeral customs include the "velorio" (an all-night vigil over the deceased), the sending of a wreath or cross, close relatives dressed in black and standard expressions of sympathy like "Reciba ud. mi mas sentido pesame" or "mis sinceras condolencias". During the "velorio" the family usually prays and receives visitors who express their condolences. Burial normally takes place the day after death. Church services are held a month

later. Catholics have a Requiem Mass said during which "IN MEMORIAM" cards are distributed to the worshippers.

Social Peculiarities

Spanish Last Names:

Most Spanish-speaking people use the surnames of both parents. Neither is ever considered to be a middle name. The father's surname precedes the mother's name. Sometimes the surnames are joined by "Y". Example: Emilio Gonzalez y García. A woman does not change her name when she marries. She simply adds to it, but it is common practice to drop the mother's surname and add the husband's joined by "DE". Example: Gloria López García married Enriques Montero Sánchez. Before her marriage, she is known as: Gloria Lopez García; after her marriage she is known as: Gloria Lopez de Montero. If she becomes a widow, she is Gloria Lopez Vuida (Vda) de Montero.

Meals:

Latin American eating habits are different from those in the United States, including the number of meals taken during the day. Tea is added to the three meals Americans are accustomed to. Breakfast is usually very light consisting of a cup of coffee with milk, plus bread, butter or cheese, and jam. Latin Americans eat lunch, their heartiest meal, in the middle of the day, generally between 12:30 and 2:00 p.m. They stop work to have tea or a snack about 5:00 p.m. Supper is between

8:00 and 9:00 p.m. and even later and is quite light. When children return from school between 4 and 6 they have a good snack, usually coffee with milk and a sandwich, Lunch and supper are generally "en famille" with the father presiding. On Sundays and feast days, meals are usually more elaborate. In Peru, for instance, the main Sunday meal may consist of a three or four course dinner: a plate of salad, a bowl of soup, a plate of stewed chicken with rice and potatoes or spaghetti with roast beef, some dessert, wine or beer and coffee or tea at the end. Foods are generally served in separate courses rather than several things together on the same plate. At formal dinners, a small glass of liqueur called "Aperitivo" is usually served before the meal. Coffee or tea is never served with a meal, but always at the end. Sugar, but never cream, is served with coffee or tea. After the meal and when time permits, it is customary to have a rather long period of conversation at the table. This is known as the "conversación de sobremesa".

<u>The Siesta:</u>

The siesta is traditionally a short period of rest after the heavy noon meal when one may relax or take a nap. As life becomes more complicated, especially in cities, the siesta is tending to be less observed and where it still is, it serves mainly to allow employees to go home for lunch.

Servants:

Wealthy people and middle class people have the possibility of hiring one or more servants who help the mother with the domestic work. In those homes where people cannot afford servants, women have to do all the work. Because profound social changes are taking place in Latin America, servants are at a premium now. An increasing number of them strive to get an education or engage in industrial work which allows them more freedom of action. For this reason husbands and children are beginning to cooperate in the work of the household.

Education

General Characteristics:

Unlike the United States where the emphasis is on local systems, Latin American countries have a highly centralized system of public education. Education is organized and controlled by a Ministry of Education, the governmental body that provides for educational institutions, technical and administrative personnel as well as curriculum plans and programs. The curriculum is predominently academic. It is overloaded with content and often arranged in heavy schedules, five and a half days a week for nine or ten months a year. The memorization of a great deal of factual material seems to be the primary concern. Sciences are integrated into the curriculum but receive less emphasis.

Educational Levels:

Primary education is commonly free and compulsory in all countries with some differences as to the number of years and the ages of students. In Peru, for instance, elementary education lasts five years. Education is obligatory up to the age of 15, in Peru. Secondary education is the transition between primary and higher education. Both primary and secondary schools have more or less the same type of organization. They offer a wide variety of subjects such as mathematics, history, geography, anatomy, physics, chemistry, Catholic doctrine, etc., which are intended to give the students a wide cultural background. Although there are many coeducational schools, boys and girls are usually segregated throughout elementary and high school. Secondary schools have various names in Latin America: colegio, liceo, instituto, escuela secundaria.

Professional training is provided by universities and other institutions of higher learning. National universities are almost free for students because the state contributes to their support. Universities are organized into "Facultades" or "Departamientos" (colleges or schools). The years of study in each "Faculdad" varies according to the specialization.

After completing high school at the age of seventeen or eighteen, the Latin American student goes directly to a professional school of medicine, law, engineering, etc. He thus has to decide upon a career long before his American counterpart, who must first complete a three or four year preparation before entering a professional school. Upon satisfactory completion of his professional training, a college graduate receives the degree of bachelor in his specialty and a professional certificate. Universities in Latin America grant a Doctoral degree to bachelors who qualify for it and after they have written a doctoral dissertation. Very few colleges or universities confer the master's degree as yet.

Examinations:

For promotion, final examinations set by the Ministry of Education are given to all students in addition to the ones they are required to take during the school year. Final examinations are usually very formal and test all the subject matter covered during the year. In some countries, the Ministry of Public Instruction appoints official examiners to administer exams in private schools.

Grading Systems:

The systems used to assess the student's academic performance vary from one country to another. In Peru, for instance, two grading scales are used. The "Vigesimal" system ranges from 1 to 20 with 11 as the passing grade. The "Centecimal" system ranges from 1 to 100 with 55 as the passing grade. In some instances, the passing marks vary: they are set by educational officials who notify the students about the change ahead of time.

The A-B-C-D-F grading scale is rarely used in Latin American schools.

Report Cards:

A report of the student's academic progress and conduct is submitted periodically by the the schools to the student's parent or guardian. The report card is usually a single, printed piece of light cardboard containing a list of all the subjects a student is taking and the grades he has made on each of them. A rating of his school conduct is also included.

Vacation:

Latin American students usually enjoy a long summer vacation. Since the seasons are the other way round, the vacation period goes from December through March. In some countries a very short vacation between semesters ahs been established. Summer courses are often offered for students who have failed two or three courses. In Peru, a high school student must repeat a grade (year) when he or she has failed three or more courses.

Social Events

Spanish people work when they have to work. They like to dedicate more time to leisure than the people of other cultures. They like to engage in cultural, religious, and recreational activities.

Cultural Activities:

Upper and middle class Latin Americans enjoy going to concerts, plays, ballets, movies, etc. There are frequent

exhibits of paintings, sculpture, folk art, etc. During the artistic season, many countries bring in internationally famous artists from abroad: opera singers, actors, musicians, etc. The most progressive countries have their own symphony orchestras, theater and ballet groups. Universities, colleges, and cultural institutions sponsor lectures on varied subjects.

Religious Activities:

Most Latin Americans are born into the Catholic faith. The Spanish calendar is full of religious holidays which are observed in varying degrees throughout the Hispanic world. On Sundays, churches are filled with people attending mass or other religious services. Latin American women usually take religion more seriously than the men who are often only nominal church members. Baptism, marriage and death, are the three times when men still turn to the Church even when they have departed from formal religious practices. Most women go to confession and take communion once or twice a year.

Recreational Activities:

In addition to the "Fiestas" (parties) which is the recreational activity Spanish people seem to enjoy the most, they also like other kinds of amusements such as sports, bullfights, movies, television shows, etc.

Sports:

Latin Americans, in general, are extremely fond of all kinds of sports. Football (soccer) is the national sport in

most Latin American countries. but there is a growing enthusiasm for other sports like basketball, tennis, swimming, track, etc.

Bullfights:

This peculiar recreational activity is still enjoyed in Spain as well as in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and a few other countries. The bullfight is not considered to be a sport like football or basketball. It is rather, a combination of the ritual and the artistic, a drama of man's courage and his sense of the tragedy of life in the face of brute force as represented by the bull.

In some countries, cockfights, gambling, horse races, and car races are common amusements. Besides all these recreational activitiee, Latin Americans enjoy other forms of entertainment. On Saturday afternoons and on Sundays, people get together at social clubs where they spend hours chatting or playing indoor games such as billiards, cards, dice, etc. In warm climates, friends meet at outdoor cafés and restaurants where they have refreshments, talk, and watch the world go by. Sometimes they go to the movies to see the latest films from Hollywood. People, of course, also enjoy listening to the radio or watching their favorite programs on television.

Holidays:

Most of the holidays in Latin America derive from religious traditions. Others are national or patriotic celebrations or other traditional festivities. On such days, schools are closed,

business is suspended, and a variety of events is scheduled for public enjoyment. On religious holidays, people celebrate a Saint's day or other religious events. Each country has a Saint dedicated to its protection (Santo Patrono). Each city or town honors its local patron saint with a special religious festival. This festival is always of particular importance in the smaller towns or provinces where local customs and traditions in music, dance, and dress are kept alive by the festivities which are a mixture of Catholic and Indian rites. Festivals of this kind can still be observed in Cuzco, Peru, the ancient capital of the Incas.

On civic holidays there are armed forces parades, school parades, folk dance and music festivals, fireworks, and occasionally industrial and agricultural fairs. Families go on picnics, spend the day in the country or in the public parks, visit museums or go to a bullfight or a soccer game. Often there are big family reunions which include children, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc., at the parents' or grandparents' homes.

Civic holidays vary from country to country. In all the Latin American republics the discovery of America by Columbus is celebrated on October 12. It is called the "Día de la Raza". Each republic in Spanish America also celebrates its own Day of Independence. Thus, Peru celebrates its "Día de la

Independencia" on July 28; Colombia, on July 20; Venezuela, on July 5, etc. Independence anniversaries are outstanding celebrations and usually last two days. Other important holidays observed in Spanish speaking countries are Christmas, New Year's Day, Easter, and the Carnival.

Christmas:

Christmas is celebrated everywhere but in different ways. Countries with a strong European influence celebrate it with a mixture of European and Spanish characteristics. In countries with a strong Spanish influence, people attend the "Misa de Gallo" (midnight mass) on December 24 and afterwards there is an intimate family reunion where a "Cena de Pascua" or "Cena de Navidad" is served, and gifts are exchanged. The "Cena de Pascva" is an elaborate dinner which includes baked stuffed turkey or hen, cake, hot chocolate and sometimes wine. People also try to give their homes some Christmas spirit by hanging up decorations, trimming Christmas trees or setting up a "Nacimiento" (Nativity scene). Small children are made to believe that Santa Claus or Papa Noel, or the Christ Child will bring them gifts if they behave well and obey their parents.

New Year's Day:

The celebration of New Year's Day has regional characteristics which vary from one country to another. In the big cosmppolitan cities like Lima, for example, it is customary for people of all social classes to "Recibir el Año Nuevo" at social clubs, night clubs, or at private homes where they dance, eat, and drink until dawn.

Easter:

Easter is one of the most important religious celebrations in the Hispanic world. It is the culmination of Lent, a forty-day period of preparation for this event. Easter is usually a three-day national holiday. On Jueves Santo (Holy Thursday) and Viernes Santo (Good Friday) business is completely suspended and people, especially women, dress in black and go to church for religious services.

Carnivals:

Some countries celebrate "Carnavales" which are festive occasions for everybody, especially for young people. "Carnavales" is the time of colorful parades, masked balls, elaborate dinners, and all kinds of entertainment. In Brazil this celebration has become an international event.

Social Traits

It is quite difficult to make generalizations about a world which is characterized by geographic, climatic, cultural, psychological, and even linguistic differences. Moreover, social customs and habits are changing everywhere. Nevertheless, certain customs or ways of life are, to a greater or lesser degree, observed in most Hispanic countries. We will describe a few of the most universal features. These features refer to social behavior only.

Greetings:

Spanish-speaking people are usually demonstrative about showing their pleasure at meeting one another. People customarily shake hands when greeting each other. Men who are relatives or good friends also embrace. The "Abrazo" is perhaps the most distinctive of all Spanish greetings. Women often kiss each other's cheeks, or merely touch cheeks. When saying goodbye, Spanish Americans shake hands again or wave goodbye, depending on the formality of the occasion. Greetings of young people to older persons are much more formal than those in the United States.

Introductions:

When introducing persons to each other the titles "Señor", "Señora", and "Señorita" are sometimes used without names because they are also common nouns in Spanish meaning "gentleman", "lady", and "young lady" in English. Thus, one may say: "Quiero presentarte al señor" (I'd like to introduce you to this gentleman).

Gestures:

Spanish people like those of other cultures use certain characteristic gestures to express ideas or feelings. These gestures may indicate love, contempt, surprise, or suggestion. They may also be used to express farewell, greeting, etc. and may differ greatly from those Americans are used to.

For example, the gesture which means "ven aca" (Come here) is the opposite of the one used by Americans. It is made with the arm extended and the palm of the hand downwards. A motioning movement is made toward the floor and not toward the sky. A lady may make the same gesturewith just her hand or her index finger. To express the idea of "Adios" or "Hasta luego" ("Goodbye" or "so long"), the hand is raised up to the face or to one side and then the fingers are shaken. To say "No" without uttering the word itself, the index finger is shaken from one side to the other in front of the face.

Ceremoniousness:

Spanish people like formality in business and social relationships. This particular social trait is observed especially among upper and middle classes and may sometimes be interpreted by foreigners as a lack of sincerity.

Courtesy:

Courtesy is the main characteristic of all classes of Latin American society, from the humblest to the most educated and cultured. Children are taught good manners at home. They are also taught to show deference to adults in such ways as offering their seats on the bus to women or old people. Children generally use the "usted" form of address to all adults, and occasionally to their parents.

Personal Influence:

Personal contact or influence is often used in order to resolve a problem or achieve a goal. This working through acquaintanceship rather than through regular channels is sometimes called "Amiguismo" or "Vara" in some countries like Peru. Thus, "Tener Vara" means to have the right connections to accomplish something.

Attire:

People of the upper and middle classes are more formal in their dress than are North Americans, especially in public places. In many exclusive clubs and restaurants men are not permitted to enter without coats and ties. Woman wear hats only on very special occasions however, e.g. weddings, cocktail parites, etc. They cover their heads with scarves or mantillas in church.

Dating:

The custom of dating in Latin American countries used to be formal. Couples were not allowed to go out without a chaperone. Today, chaperones are virtually non-existent but dating is still controlled by parents who try to instill in their children a high degree of responsiblility whether there are adults present or not.

Bargaining:

Bargaining, known in Spanish as "El Regateo", is a common practice, especially in markets and small stores and with sidewalk vendors whose prices are not taken seriously. Bargaining has almost completely disappeared in the big department stores, supermarkets, and other self-service establishments where there are set prices.

Other Social Customs:

Some of these customs can be quite different from those of other cultures. As examples of differences between Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon customs, we will describe two social patterns: table manners and the setting of a table.

Table Manners:

Persons seated at the dining table are expected to have both hands on the table when not eating. Having elbows on the table or one hand on the lap may be considered bad manners. When eating, the knife is held with the right hand and the fork with the left. Serving dishes are not customarily used. Meals are always served up on the individual plates in the kitchen and brought to the dining room by the maid or the hostess. It is considered good manners to leave something on one's plate.

Table Setting:

At each person's place there is usually a service plate or a place mat on which the individual plate brought in from the kitchen is placed. The fork and the napkin are found at the person's left, the knife, to his right, and the spoon horizontally above the plate or place mat between the fork and the knife. When wine is served the various glasses are placed in front of the service plate or place mat.

Socio-Economic Features

In this chapter, we will briefly describe some general aspects of the socio-economic status of Latin American countries. The following facts relate to social stratification, economy, occupations and professions, communications, etc.

Social Stratification:

Social stratification in Latin America is not uniform. In fact, each country has its own distinctive social stratification which seems to be the result of a long process wherein Spanish traits mingled with Indian and African elements. In general, three social strata can be observed: the aristocracy, the middle class, and the lower class.

The Aristocracy:

The members of this social group have always been the ruling

class and the most affluent. They have been the owners of big "Hacienda" estates. Their rights and privileges have been transmitted from one generation to another. At present, things are changing a great deal. In some countries agrarian reform is going on and in others it is about to happen.

The Middle Class:

In this class one finds people who have received more education and have been able to achieve a more elevated standard of living. In countries where this class is numerous, two substrata can be observed: the upper middle class which includes professional people (doctors, engineers, professors, etc.) and the lower middle class which includes people who have received regular but no professional or vocational schooling. They work in factories, and in commercial activities which do not require manual or intellectual specialization.

The Lower Class:

This group constitutes the other extreme stratum of Latin American society. They are the people who perform manual work, usually unskilled, farm work, or other types of work which require less intellectual ability. These people are usually Indians or people of very humble social origin.

Economy:

The economy of Latin American countries depends basically on agriculture and the production of raw materials. There are very few heavy industries so that products such as cars must be imported at very high cost. Many agricultural products are not produced in sufficient quantities to satisfy the needs of home consumption and, therefore, they must also be imported. The cost of living has gone up constantly and rapidly in most countries and has been the source of much discontent. The currency has depreciated to various degrees in several countries and in some it has remained stable. At times inflation has become acute.

Professions and Occupations:

Professions are held in much higher esteem than trades. The middle or upper class Spanish American has traditionally considered manual work as a symbol of the lower class. This prejudice is now changing in most countries. The professions with the highest prestige in Latin America are medicine, engineering, and law. Others such as architecture, economics. and teaching are gaining ground. The most common occupations are office employees, and salesmen. There are also many people who make a living as mechanics, electricians, and construction workers. Women are usually housewives, teachers,

maids, secretaries, etc. In recent times, women have begun to enter occupational fields which were formerly closed to them

Media:

Radio and television are the most common mass media in Latin America. Radio is the most widespread system for transmitting news. Even poor people who scarcely have anything to eat, have a radio. Television is becoming widespread too, but TV sets are still beyond the reach of the lower classes because of their high cost. Newspapers and magazines are also an important medium of communication. There are publications of all kinds, for all tastes and interests. In most countries the press is free by law, and there are no political or religious limitations. Publishing companies are free to publish anything they wish. Books are quite expensive and people of low income cannot afford them. The number of public libraries is still limited, but "Bibli buses" (bookmobiles) are becoming more common. Advertising on radio and television is common because of the stations' need for financial support. In Lima, for instance, only one TV channel is state-owned; the other five are commercial. There are all types of programs. American TV programs are very popular; ex., "Los Picapiedras" (The Flintstones), "Los Intocables" (The Untouchables), "La Caldera del Diablo" (Peyton Place), etc.

Most of the programs are dubbed; others have subtitles in Spanish. Where telestar stations have been built, it is possible, sometimes, to watch world events while they are happening as was the case of man's first landing on the moon. The telephone and telegraph are also two common media of communication, although these services leave much to be desired in most Latin American countries. The "teléfono automático" (dial phone) is the most common type of telephone found throughout Latin America.

Transportation:

Practically all countries in Latin America use modern means of transportation such as trucks, cars, buses, railroads, planes, and ships. In the more backward areas, horses, oxen, and donkeys are still used. Most Latin American governments appropriate large sums of money for the construction of roads; as a result, roads are improving but are still generally poor. The Pan American Highway, which is to link the American continent from Alaska to Argentina, is not fully completed: there is a short span between Panama and Colombia which has not been built yet. Railroads are more scarce than roads. In some countries, because of financial difficulty, railroads operate only in a very limited way. Moreover, the construction of railroads and roads in countries with high mountains like

Peru. Bolivia, and Columbia is an enterprise that demands a great deal of money and effort.

Housing:

During Colonial times and at the beginning of the Republic, the building of homes in Latin America followed the Spanish type of architecture with its central patios, iron-grilled windows, high walls, and spacious rooms. They were built to last several generations. Modern homes are more functional. They no longer have central patios but instead, have front and back yards with gardens. In the rapidly growing cities, apartment living is becoming more frequent because of lack of space.

Weights and Measures:

The metric system is used throughout the Spanish world. Thus, a Spanish speaker will use "Kilos" instead of "Libras" (pounds); "Kilometros" instead of "Millas" (miles); "Centimetros" instead of "Pulgadas" (inches). However, there are some instances where the English system is used, especially by carpenters and automobile mechanics.

Markets:

Markets in Latin America have certain characteristics that make them somewhat different from those in the United States. Every sizable town has a municipal market known as "The Plaza del Mercado" where people can purchase all kinds of fruit, vegetables, and meat. A market is usually divided into various sections or departments. Each department has several stalls which are individually leased and attended to

by a salesman or saleswoman. In rural areas there are open-air markets where, besides fruits and vegetables, it is also possible to buy textiles and hand-made articles. In modern urban centers, the U.S. style supermarket and department store is rapidly replacing other types of stores.

Restaurants:

Restaurants in Latin America are basically like the ones in the United States except, of course, for the meals they serve. Every country has its own typical dishes which, in general, tend to be rather spicy. Most restaurants offer complete dinners or lunches as well as "a la carte" service. In the big cosmopolitan cities there are restaurants of all kinds and for all tastes. Chinese and Italian restaurants are the most common ones.

Cafeterias:

This type of eating place is not very popular in Latin America. For various reasons, Spanish Americans have been somewhat reluctant to adopt the cafeteria approach to eating. They would rather sit at a table and be waited on. Sometimes hospital or school coffee shops are called cafeterias, but are not self-service; they are snack-bars and usually serve refreshments, snacks, and light meals.

Cultural Characteristics

Although diversity, rather than unity, characterizes the peoples of Latin America, there are, certain

cultural features common to all Hispanic peoples. We shall try to describe some of them briefly.

Individualism:

The Latin American is, above all, an individualist. Unlike the American, who is liable to be ineffectual when unorganized, the Latin American is not an organization man. He is basically a man of feeling rather than one of method or action. He does not take kindly to the restraints of team work. Among his interests, his family comes first. The high value he places on the individual diminishes his sense of solidarity with the members of his community. He is seldom civic-minded and usually is little concerned with public welfare, except as he himself or his family are affected.

Regionalism:

The love of homeland or native region is another outstanding characteristic of all Latin Americans. This feeling, which is strong and enduring, can be observed in large cosmopolitan cities where members of a given region or town organize themselves in a "regional social club" where they meet periodically to enjoy their own music, dances, foods, and customs.

Personal Dignity:

In few respects are Americans and Latin Americans so far apart as in the latter's sense of personal dignity. In every social strata of Latin American society the concept of man's

dignity is highly prized. This feature accounts for the aversion to manual work which is observed among wellbred Latin Americans. It also explains some of the finest aspects of Hispanic society. Latin Americans, for instance, would consider it degrading to accept welfare or to send one's parents to a public old age home.

Fatalism:

A Spanish American is generally unwilling to oppose conditions as they are. He is more likely to resign himself to whatever fate holds in store for him. He usually meets difficulties by adjusting to them rather than trying to overcome them. This feature is commonly known as "La Fuerza del Destino" (The Force of Destiny).

Hospitality:

This Latin American characteristic is shared by upper and lower classes alike and it is warm and sincere. Latin Americans express their sense of hospitality with phrases like, "Esta es su casa" (this home is yours) or "La casa es chica, pero el corazón es grande" (our home is small but our hearts are big). Friendship has a special meaning to them, for friends constitute the expanded family and the relations among them are based on affection and confidence. On the other hand, the Latin American admits only a few intimates to

his home and his attitude toward the outsider is one of reserve. He tends to be quite discreet and cautious. When the occas on demands it, he is an expert at concealing his real thoughts.

Conception of Time:

As a rule, time is unimportant to a Latin American. He dislikes rush and hurry and therefore does not respect punctuality in the same way as does the North American. The Latin American is consistently late to all kinds of social engagements. However, he does try to be on time for special occasions such as a business appointment. the movies. theater, the bullfight, etc. Today, people are becoming more concerned about punctuality, especially professional and working people.

Attitude Toward Work:

Unlike the North American, the Latin American has never experienced the exaltation of business or work for its own sake. To him, business or a job is only a means of making a living, of providing the money for the enjoyment of leisure which is the real purpose of existence. This feeling seems to be shared by members of all social classes. "El Negocio" is not a thing to make a cult of. The Latin American businessman will leave his office in the middle of the morning to spend an hour over coffee in a nearby café. He may transact a good

piece of business while enjoying a cup of coffee or a drink with another businessman. Today of course, business habits are changing particularly in important cities where the tempo of life has become much faster.

Living for the Present

Whereas the North American is very much preoccupied with time and works toward reaching a decent retirement in the future, the Spanish American does not have a very clear concept of the future and prefers immediate rewards. Stated in other terms; while the North American lives IN today, but FOR tomorrw, the Latin American lives IN and FOR the present.

DEVELOPING TEACHING TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION

The teacher of a foreign language must not limit himself to teaching the sound system, the patterns of structure, and the vocabulary of the language. He must also try to impart an understanding of the way of life of those people using the language. "If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning; for unless he is warned, unless he receives cultural instruction, he will associate American concepts of objects with the foreign symbols." (Robert Politzer, Report on the 5th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching, Georgetown University).

The teacher can approach this task by pointing out the contrasts or similarities between socio-cultural patterns in a foreign community and those with which the students are familiar. It is especially important to help students realize that "different from" does not mean "better than" or "worse than" --- that other nations' ways of life are as interesting and as meaningful as their own. The best teacher conveys the spirit of the people whose language he teaches, as well as explaining the historical and psychological factors that make them what they are.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In planning and teaching the program of cultural study the teacher should remember that:

1. Every culture is unique and must be understood on its own terms.

2. Language cannot be separated completely from the culture of which it is a part.
3. The aim of cultural study is to acquire an understanding of the foreign culture.
4. The cultural content of the foreign language course should emphasize features of everyday life rather than encyclopedic information about the foreign culture.
5. Since the language itself contains many clues to the culture, the study of linguistic skills can offer an approach to the study of the culture.
6. Just as the structure of a language is best learned by imitation and practice, in the same way knowledge of culture is best imparted as a corollary to the task of learning the language.
7. Knowledge of the foreign life and culture should progress hand in hand with mastery of the language.
8. Learning about the people's culture and society should be part of everyday classwork.
9. The students should try to actually experience the culture through activities of various kinds.

METHODS OF TEACHING CULTURE

The following is a summary of approaches to presenting a culture contained in an article by H. Ernest Lewald entitled "A Tentative Outline of Problems in the Knowledge, Understanding, and Teaching of Cultures Pertaining to the Target Language" published in the Modern Language Journal, May, 1968.

1. *The Pluralistic Method* - This approach would be elastic enough to allow for any analysis of any material belonging to the target culture and would have the advantage of allowing the teacher to operate eclectically within the limitations of his experience, knowledge, and training.
2. *The Structural Method* - This approach leads to the understanding of cultural concepts through the use of comparative and contrastive techniques. This approach has the advantage of operating partly within the field of the student's cultural experience.
3. *The Semiotic Approach* - This approach consists of a system of signs used to explain primary or secondary meanings in visual, conceptual or linguistic symbols within the context of a foreign culture.
4. *The Socio-linguistic Approach* - This approach involves the establishment of cultural and linguistic prototypes in a foreign culture.
5. *The Semantic Approach* - This approach involves the study of a foreign culture, and the derivation of its values, attitudes and beliefs through semantic analysis.
6. *The Methodological-imitative Approach* - In this approach one uses methodological or programmed devices, particularly of a visual nature, which allow the student to operate on an imitative level in order to absorb the target culture.
7. *The Use of Area Studies* - Sociological, political, economic, geographic and historical forces shape every society and determine cultural structures. From the instructional point of view, the cooperative effort of experts in each of these fields could not be equalled by one teacher in charge of a course on culture.

General Procedures (Suggestion)

The following suggestions, if followed closely, should help the teacher with his task of imparting systematic cultural knowledge to his students.

1. *Acquaint students with the culture of a foreign people slowly and systematically.*
2. *Use your own knowledge and experience of the foreign culture whenever possible.*
3. *Make an inventory of culture-laden structures, vocabulary, idioms, sayings, etc. which occur in the lessons and note the cultural implications after each item.*
4. *Provide an explanation, in the target language if possible, for each cultural implication and especially for those aspects of foreign customs that are different from those of American life.*
5. *Always teach culture in terms of "the ways of life" of the foreign people as reflected in their everyday speech.*
6. *Whenever possible, explanation or description of a cultural point should bring out similarity, identity, or contrast in two patterns of culture.*
7. *Reinforce the cultural comparisons and contrasts by reference to the students' own experiences.*
8. *Use all available audio-visual materials in studying the cultural content of foreign language materials.*
9. *Select supplementary dialogues and readings based on experiences which are not only compatible with the age*

and interests of the students but which will also clearly demonstrate behavior culturally appropriate for speakers of the language.

10. Finally, be sure that the students can (a) identify or recognize the basic cultural concepts taught, (b) describe the concepts, and (c) compare and contrast them with parallel concepts from their own culture.

Suggested Activities

The following are specific activities designed to enhance cultural understanding in foreign language classes. In choosing any activity, the teacher should first consider the maturity and instructional level of the student.

1. The classroom itself should evoke the atmosphere of the foreign country. Students should be involved as much as possible in the planning and arrangements of displays which authentically reflect the culture of the people whose language is being studied. Realia and cultural displays should be functional in the sense that they can be used in the daily lesson to reinforce certain aspects of it.

2. The bulletin board is another way of making a foreign culture come to life. Here again, students should assist with the planning and preparation of bulletin board displays. The bulletin board may be planned with specific cultural concepts in mind or it may take the form of a "newspaper" with pictures, cartoons, and articles on current events in foreign country. All or most of the "newspaper" materials

should be contributed by students. It is suggested that one student serve as "editor".

3. As part of the daily warm-up session two or three times a week, students may wish to give weather reports, temperature readings, and brief news items which, at the upper levels, can lead into more involved discussions.

4. The students should be introduced to the songs, dances, and food of the foreign country. The class should have a repertoire of authentic and attractive songs, and students should enter and leave the foreign language classroom to music. Singing games, as well as dances which are accompanied by singing, are also enjoyable activities. Physical education teachers are often willing to help with the teaching of folk dances. Home economics teachers might be consulted on the preparation of foreign foods or the students themselves, might prepare typical breakfast or noonday meal as an interesting project.

5. Art and foreign languages can be correlated in a number of ways: bulletin board displays, slide/tape programs, films, oral and written reports on famous artists and masterpieces. One suggested activity is to have the students describe in the foreign language the content of a representative art print or slide. In the process the student learns the name of the painting and the artist. Even Level I students are able to identify colors, people, buildings, animals

etc. At more advanced levels, students can begin to interpret, compare, contrast, and venture personal opinions. This activity is particularly appropriate as a warm-up exercise.

6. Proverbs, poems, counting rhymes, and jokes all provide an insight into the culture of the foreign country.
7. Students can be given an introduction to the humor of the people through the use of cartoons and comic strips. At the upper levels these can provide the basis for discussion, often in conjunction with a reading selection.
8. As soon as students can write simple compositions about their daily activities, they should be encouraged to enter into correspondence with students of the same age in the foreign country.
9. The exchange of tapes between American and foreign students is an excellent way of obtaining information about the way of life in the foreign country.
10. A film depicting life in the foreign country or some aspect of its culture is also helpful. The students should be prepared in advance for the viewing, however, and there should be a discussion following to clearly identify concepts as well as to describe, compare, and contrast them.

11. At the more advanced levels tapes of foreign broadcasts can be useful in stimulating interest in the foreign culture.

12. At the advanced levels, current events discussions are worthwhile if newspapers, periodicals, and other source materials in the foreign language are readily available.

13. At advanced levels, native speakers may be invited into the classroom to discuss topics which clearly interest the students. The discussion should be prepared for through research, preliminary discussion, formulation of pertinent questions for the speaker, etc.

14. Again at advanced levels, literature can often serve to illustrate certain cultural concepts such as family life, the quality of old age, rural scenes, the atmosphere of a city, etc.

15. Language club activities furnish an excellent means of reinforcing cultural concepts which have been introduced in the classroom. These activities include singing, folk-dancing, games, dramatizations, role-playing, improvizations, preparation of all kinds of taped programs including videotapes, discussion groups, etc. Through the use of films, film-strips, slides and guest speakers, students might plan an ongoing project such as an imaginary trip through the country whose language they are studying.

Evaluation of Cultural Learning

Evaluation must be an integral part of the cultural program and measures for judging its effectiveness should be "built into" the program from the very beginning. The use of written aptitude tests to judge cultural appreciation and understanding is still in the experimental stage. At present, the most satisfactory way to judge attitude is through observation of the student's behavior, and his reaction to cultural concepts, reading material, and foreign visitors. Appropriate action and behavior are to be taken as evidence of functional understanding of cultural concepts.

What to Test?

As a rule, tests should be designed to focus on understanding rather than upon memorization of cultural facts. There are some questions that the teacher could profitably ask himself with regard to his tests of cultural understanding:

1. *What should the student be able to do or to say when he has learned the specific cultural concept? (terminal behavior or desired outcome of learning)*
2. *What are the circumstances under which the student will be expected to do or say what he has learned?*
3. *How well does the student have to perform under the stated conditions so that the teacher will accept his performance as adequate?*

4. *If test tiems from a number of different objectives are to be included in the same test, in what proportion is each to be represented?*
5. *Does each item measure just one cultural element?*
6. *Can the test be objectively evaluated?*
7. *Will the items be stated in English or in the target language?*

Testing Techniques:

The real problem in testing cross-cultural understanding is to find out if a student of a given culture has truly assimilated the cultural patterns of another.

If cross-cultural understanding is taken to mean knowledge of what the people of a culture do, then we can use a variety of objective techniques to test such a knowledge. The following are some examples of tests which can be both useful and productive:

1. *True/False: For Peruvians, the heartiest meal of the day is breakfast. (true? False?)*
2. *Appropriate/Inappropriate: On being introduced to the parents of his Mexian pen-pal, David Doe said: "¡Mucho gusto!" (Appropriate? Inappropriate?)*
3. *Same/Different: A "college" in the U.S. and a "colegio" in Peru are _____(The same? Different?)*
4. *Multiple Choice: You have just spilled soup all over the table cloth at dinner in a Colombian home where you are a guest. You do and say one of the following:_____ Choose the most culturally appropriate of four choices)*

Choose the least culturally appropriate of four choices)

5. Matching: Match the typical gestures in Colum A with the situations in which they are most commonly found as listed in Colum B.

6. Short-Answer: Which gestures are commonly used when the Spanish speaker wishes to stress a point in a discussion?

7. Completion: Students in Peru attend school from the month of_____to_____.

8. Situation: What inference would you make if you heard a Spanish speaker say "¡Permiso!"

This type of question can be made more complex by using brief conversational exchanges. The student can be asked to infer what is implied in one or two of the expressions used.

9. Essay: For more advanced students, these may range from a paragraph in the foreign language on some aspect of daily life, to longer essays on social and political questions, aspects of history, music, art, architecture, etc. For essays of this type, some type of guide is indicated.

Achievement to be Expected

The teaching of cultural understanding must follow progressive stages. Each stage or level should accomplish a number of goals which the teacher must set up at the beginning of the course. It goes without saying that he should also try to cover the cultural material in terms of students' performance rather than in terms of

content. The following levels of achievement are suggested: They should help the teacher establish his own.

Level I:

Upon completion of Level I the students should be able to demonstrate that they can act according to the proprieties of the foreign culture in situations calling for greetings, introductions, leave-takings, and table manners. They should also be able to talk about some features of school life as well as some of the leisure-time activities that students of their own age enjoy in the foreign society.

Level II:

Upon completion of Level II the students should be able to:

1. Describe in the target language some of the major themes in the value system of the foreign culture.
2. Describe orally or in writing the characteristics of the family, stating the role of the parents and children in the foreign society.
3. Describe orally or in writing some of the major influences of the geographical environment on the people's life.
4. Read appropriate brief passages depicting cultural and social patterns.

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